



U.S. Immigration
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ICE OPENS NEW ATTACHÉ OFFICE IN SWITZERLAND ***--Historic Pistol Stolen from Swiss Museum Returned During Ceremony--***

BERN, SWITZERLAND– At a ceremony here today with Swiss government officials, Michael J. Garcia, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), announced the official opening of the new ICE Attaché office in Switzerland. During the ceremony, Garcia also returned to Switzerland a rare, 106-year-old, Luger pistol that had been stolen from a Swiss museum in 1996 and was recently recovered by ICE agents in the United States.

"I am pleased to present to the government of Switzerland a staff of highly qualified ICE agents to fill this important new ICE Attaché office, the latest addition to ICE's Office of International Affairs. Having ICE agents in Switzerland will further enhance the already outstanding cooperation that exists between Swiss authorities and the Department of Homeland Security," Garcia said.

"Today's repatriation of the 1898 Borchardt Luger pistol to Switzerland is a fitting example of the results that can be achieved when ICE agents team up with Swiss authorities. I believe this case will be the first of many successful joint endeavors with our Swiss law enforcement counterparts," said Garcia.

Consistent with international practice, ICE special agents working in the Attaché office have no law enforcement authority in Switzerland. Instead, they serve as the law enforcement liaison between Swiss authorities and ICE in the United States as well as Department of Homeland Security components in the United States. Switzerland operates a law enforcement liaison office in its Embassy in Washington, D.C. performing similar functions.

Located at the U.S. Embassy Annex, the new ICE Attaché office will focus on a wide variety of crimes that are investigated by ICE. These include illegal arms and technology shipments; money laundering and related financial crimes; human trafficking; commercial fraud; contraband smuggling; child exploitation, intellectual property rights violations, and immigration fraud.

ICE currently has 32 foreign offices around the world staffed by more than 200 ICE agents, analysts and support personnel.

Background on the 1898 Luger pistol

The pistol repatriated today in Switzerland is the 1898 Borchardt Luger, serial number 5, parabellum pistol. It is the oldest surviving example in the world of a prototype self-loading pistol designed by Hugo Borchardt, as serial numbers one through four are thought to no longer exist. This prototype pistol is the one originally delivered and demonstrated to the Swiss trials commission in November 1898 when it conducted field trials of several models of self-loading pistols. In 1900, the Swiss military adopted the Borchardt Luger prototype as its standard sidearm. Switzerland was the first country to adopt the high-powered, self-loading pistol for military purposes, which resulted in 3 million plus production models manufactured up to 1943.



In 1996, the Borchardt Luger SN 5 was stolen from the collection at the Waffenfabrik museum, which later became the RUAG, Thun, Switzerland museum. RUAG hired an attorney in the U.S. to attempt to recover the pistol. That attorney contacted the U.S. Attorney's Office in Austin to inquire about initiating a criminal investigation.

The U.S. Attorney contacted Vincent G. Klink, the ICE Resident Agent in Charge in Austin, TX, who opened an investigation into the stolen pistol. After four months of extensive investigation by ICE agents, the pistol was recovered from an internationally known antique firearm collector during the execution of search warrants last July.

ICE used the services of an expert from Weller and Dufty Ltd. the premier arms and armor auction house in the United Kingdom, to authenticate the pistol. The expert determined that the pistol was in fact the 1898 Borchardt Luger, serial number 5, and valued it at \$720,000.